

+ ORIGINAL
4375 H. 3.
LETTERS

Between the Reverend

Mr. *JOHN WESLEY*,

AND

Mr. *RICHARD TOMPSON*,

Respecting the

12 DOCTRINE of ASSURANCE,
as held by the former:

Wherein that Tenet is fully examined.

WITH

Some Strictures on *Christian Perfection*.

LONDON:

Printed for L. DAVIS, and C. REYMERS,
against Gray's-Inn-Gate, Holbourn.

MDCCLX.

ORIGINAL
LETTERS



DO NOT

Which must be examined.

WITH

Some Graces on Cyprian Pottery

LONDON:

Printed for I. Davis, at the
against Great St. Martin's Lane.

MDCCLXX

INTRODUCTION.

IT is necessary to give the Reader some Account of the following Letters, with the Reason of their Publication.

Mr. *Tompson*, in his Youth, was induced to join himself to Mr. *Wesley* and his Associates; and, upon the first Institution of their Societies, became a Member. But soon, thro' the force of superior Judgment, found it necessary to withdraw himself. Being of a very serious and speculative Mind, he applied himself, with great Affiduity, to reading: And, tho' not blest with the Advantages of Education, made no small Progress in Literature; especially in that Branch which respects Divinity. The Editor of these Letters hath long been acquainted with him; and hath not the Pleasure of knowing many Men either of a more sober and exemplary Life, or of a more acute Understanding and clear Judgment. As the Doctrine of *Assurance* hath ever been a main Pillar of the methodistical Building, no wonder Mr. *Tompson* readily embraced it: However, calm Reflection soon opened his Mind, and he pursued his Thoughts upon the Subject with the clearest and most accurate Attention.

Hearing that Mr. *Wesley* was about to print Annotations upon the New Testament, he wrote an *anonymous* Letter to him, respecting the Doctrine of *original Sin*,* which Mr. *Wesley* received so well, that he sent him the following Answer.

To P. V. †

Mr. WESLEY's Answer to the First Letter,

June 28, 1755.

SOME Days since I received your Favour of the Twenty-second Instant, which came exceeding seasonably; for I was just revising my Notes on the Fifth Chapter to the *Romans*: One of which I found, upon a closer Inspection, seemed to assert such an Imputation of *Adam's Sin* to his Posterity, as might make way for the horrible Decree. I therefore struck it out immediately; as I would willingly do, whatsoever should appear to be any way inconsistent with that grand Principle, "The Lord is loving to every Man, and his Mercy is over all his Works."

If you have observed any Thing in any of the Tracts I have published, which you think is not agreeable to Scripture or Reason, you will oblige me by pointing out, and by communicating to

* This Letter deserves to be made known, and may perhaps appear on some other Occasion.

† These were the initial Letters Mr. *Tompson* chose to make use of; the Reason for which he assigns, as also for not writing to Mr. *Wesley* in his own Name, at the Close of the last Letter.

[3]
me, any Remarks you have occasionally made.
I seek two Things in this World; Truth and
Love: Whoever assists me in this Search, is a
Friend indeed; whether personally known, or
unknown, to,

S I R,

Your humble Servant,

J. WESLEY.

This drew on the Correspondence, as will ap-
pear from the First Letter following, which be-
gins with referring to the Request made in
Mr. Wesley's Letter.

MR. *Tompson* happening one Day to converse
with the Editor, respecting the Doctrine
of Assurance, as held by the Methodists, mention-
ed his Correspondence with Mr. *Wesley*: And, the
Editor expressing a Desire to read it, he was kind
enough to communicate the Letters to him:
With which, being much satisfied, he shewed
them to several Friends, as well Clergymen as
others; who, expressing equal Satisfaction, seem-
ed to agree in Opinion, that they might be of
Service, if made public; as tending abundantly
to shew, from Mr. *Wesley's* own *Concessions*, the
true Nature of this pernicious Doctrine; and of
Consequence to settle many Minds, who are
disturbed with respect to it.

This Opinion was mentioned to Mr. *Tompson*, and he declared his Readiness of Assent; but the Editor, imagining it would not be proper to publish any Person's Letters without their Knowledge, requested Mr. *Tompson* to inform Mr. *Wesley* of the Design, and to ask his Permission: He returned him the following Answer.

August 22, 1759.

I Am afraid you would hardly save yourself harmless, by the Publication of those Letters: However, if you are inclined to run the Hazard, I do not object. Only it would be needful for you to advertise the Readers, that what I wrote was wrote in Haste, just as I could snatch a little Time now and then, to answer the private Letter of a private Friend, without any Thought of its going farther. I am,

Your affectionate Brother,

J. WESLEY.

Such is the History we have to give of this Correspondence: Upon which we shall not presume to forestal the Reader's Judgment, by any Remarks; but leave him to make such Observations as, we apprehend, will immediately occur to every attentive Peruser.

ORIGINAL

ORIGINAL LETTERS

Between the

Rev. Mr. *Wesley* and Mr. *Tompson*,

Respecting the

DOCTRINE of ASSURANCE, &c.

LETTER I.

From P. V. to the Rev. Mr. J. *Wesley*.

Rev. Sir,

July 10, 1753.

AS to your Request, that "If I have ob-
served any thing in any of your Tracts
which I think not agreeable to Scripture or
Reason, I would communicate to you my
Sentiments thereon." I know not well what
to say thereto: That I think differently from
you in some Particulars, is certain; and especi-
ally

ally in two Articles: First, concerning "*Assurance*, being essential to *justifying Faith*;" and secondly, concerning "*sinless Perfection*." But I cannot flatter myself with the Hopes that any thing which I can offer, will prevail with you to relinquish either of these Opinions, to which you appear to be so very warmly attached. I wish some Person of *Parts* and *Learning* would, in a candid manner, enter into a Discussion of these Particulars; however, as you have been pleased to desire my Remarks, I am unwilling to refuse a Compliance with your Request.

It is a Consideration of *great Weight* with me, that I cannot learn that either of these Opinions hath ever been the ~~Doctrine~~ Doctrine of the *Primitive Church*. For (to use the Words of the learned Bishop *Bull*) "I am, and always shall be, afraid of interpreting Scripture contrary to the Stream of Antiquity, unless upon the most clear Arguments against it; a Case which I believe will never happen. The consentient Judgments of primitive Antiquity, will surely outweigh a Multitude of Probabilities and plausible Reasons." But *perhaps* you will say, "that you have very plain Scripture to prove what you assert in both these Cases now before us." To which I reply, that those Scriptures which you bring for that Purpose, appear to me, *when rightly understood*, to teach no such thing; nay, I think I can produce very clear Scriptures which teach quite the contrary. But the Time will not now permit me to enter into a particular Examination of that Point. If you should think proper to make any Reply to this, that, *perhaps*, may be

be the Business of a more convenient Opportunity.

I do not dispute, Sir, whether an *Assurance* that a Person's *past* Sins are forgiven, be attainable in this Life; that is no Part of our Difference. But the Proposition which I argue against is this, "that no Person is a *true Believer in Christ*, but he who either certainly *knows*, or "has known by the *immediate Revelation of the Holy Ghost*, that his Sins are forgiven." I observed before, that I cannot learn that this has ever been the [REDACTED] Doctrine of the Christian Church in any age; and not only so, but I find it contrary to the experience of many Persons, of whose Interest in *Christ* there cannot be any reasonable Doubt.

It is certain that, *in the Nature of the Thing*, *Assurance* is neither of the *Essence of Faith*; neither is it essentially connected with it. I must believe *antecedently* to the Act of Justification, and that Act must pass before God can reveal to me that he has passed such an Act; and it will hardly, I suppose, be affirmed that it is impossible for God to pass such an Act in my Favour, without revealing to me that he has passed it. That would be to affirm, that the passing one Act, must necessarily oblige him to another Act, which is absurd: And therefore if God is obliged to act in the latter Case at all, it must be by virtue of some Promise made to Mankind so to do. But that he has made any such Promise, I declare I cannot find in all the Bible.

I have

I have not Leisure now, as I observed before, to enter into a particular Disquisition of those *Texts of Scripture* which are supposed by you to countenance this Opinion; but shall only observe, that after having very carefully considered them all, the most that I think can possibly be inferred from them is, that the Witness of *God's Spirit* is, in a greater or less Degree, generally attainable.

There is one thing on this Head, that I think hath not been so carefully attended to as it ought; namely, the Distinction between *full Assurance*, (which must certainly, in the very *Nature of the Thing*, exclude all *Doubt and Fear*) and that *Witness of the Spirit* which many Persons have, who cannot with any Degree of Certainty discover whether it is his Witness or not; that they feel something of that kind they are ready enough to confess, but are apt to suspect that it is not what it really is, and what others can discern it to be by the Fruit which they bring forth.

It is indeed asserted in the Preface to your Second Journal, "that a Person may be a Believer, who is not freed from Doubt and Fear." Which is the very thing that I contend for. But how to reconcile this with your other Doctrine, "that a Man cannot be justified without knowing that he is so," I confess I am quite at a loss: It appears to me to be a plain Contradiction to it. That a Person may be a Believer whose *Assurance* is withdrawn, I think you likewise allow. And why a Person may not be a Believer, without an *Assurance*, who has never had it,

it, as well as one that has and is now without it, I cannot understand.

I think that the Authority of the Church of England, has been mistakenly pleaded in this Article. To have "a *sure Trust* or *Confidence* in God, that my Sins are forgiven:" And to be, by *immediate Revelation* from him, *assured* that they are, is I think very different things. The Words *sure Trust* do, I apprehend, mean no more than a *Trust* founded on a *reasonable Ground*, in Opposition to a *vain Confidence*: Neither can I see how any *Trust* at all, can consist with *clear* and *full Assurance*. I should look upon it as a very absurd Speech to say, I *trust* that the Dead will rise; and yet I do not think, that we have the same *Degree* of Evidence that this will come to pass, that a Person to whom God *immediately reveals* that he has forgiven his Sins, has for that. 'Tis true indeed, that the Assent to both these Propositions is founded on the *express Testimony of God*: But tho' I have *sufficient*, yet I have not the same *Degree* of Evidence that God dictated those particular Words of Scripture that I have of the other, if God *immediately* reveal it to my Soul. For in the one Case, the *Revelation* is *immediate*; in the other, *mediate* only.

I beg Leave to remark farther, that our Church in this Definition of *Faith* cannot, without great Absurdity, be supposed to speak of that *Faith* which is the *immediate proximate Cause* of Justification, but of that which follows after it. The Proposition to which she supposes my Assent to be given, is, *that my Sins are forgiven*; therefore this

this Forgiveness must be the *Object* of my Assent; and consequently antecedent to it; which, on Supposition that she intended a Definition of that *Faith* which is the *procuring Cause* of Justification, is making her to assert this evident Contradiction, that tho' it is necessary for me to believe in order to be justified, yet that I am justified before I believe at all.

It is very surprising to me to hear it so confidently asserted, that if Men have not a *clear Assurance* that their Sins are forgiven, their *Faith* doth not differ from that of the Devils: Strange Doctrine this! Is there no Difference between my believing, "that *Christ* has actually satisfied " *divine Justice* for my Sins, and that *God* is " willing to be reconciled to me on that Account,"—and the *Faith of a Devil*? which is, that neither *Christ*, nor *any one else*, has made any for *his*; but that he must assuredly perish for ever. Hath not *God* expressly promised, that he will justify every Man who sincerely *repents* and *believes thus*? But hath he given any Promise to justify *Devils*, on that or any other Account? It is matter of Wonder to me, to find Persons so very thoughtless: It is likewise not a little surprising, to hear that those who are supposed to be *Unbelievers*, are exhorted to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What would the Apostles? What would the primitive Church? What would the Compilers of our Liturgy, have thought of such Directions as these? Is not the Sacrament the actual Communication of *Christ*, with all his Benefits, to every worthy Receiver? Are we not commanded in Scripture, to see that

we

we come thereto properly qualified, least we eat and drink our own Condemnation? And can any one be properly qualified to receive *Christ*, without *Faith*? Impossible! Suppose I were to question one of these supposed Unbelievers, who had been at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as follows? Have you, together with the Bread and Wine, received *Christ*? He would, I suppose, answer No (because he was not sensible thereof). I ask him farther, Is there any Medium between receiving worthily and unworthily? that is, between receiving *Christ*, and eating and drinking Condemnation? If he understood any thing, he must reply, No. I continue, How came you to go to receive that which you must know, if you suppose yourself an Unbeliever, that you were not qualified to receive? Perhaps he would answer, that he went there in order to get Faith. I should then immediately ask, Who gave you Authority to go there without Faith? Did you never read that *Philip* would not baptize the Euthen till he professed to believe with all his Heart? It is very evident, that my Respondent must here be quite dumb. I cannot help adopting, on this Occasion, the Sentiments of that excellent Person the late truly valuable, and justly lamented, Dr. *Doddridge*; namely, "that the Nature of *Faith* was never more misrepresented, than it is at this present."

I shall conclude this Article with observing, that if that Person who actually believes that *Christ* has died for his Sins, and goes to the holy Sacrament with a reasonable Expectation of receiving the Benefits of his Death; if such a one, I say,

I say, be an *Unbeliever*, I shall despair of ever understanding what a *Believer* is, as long as I live. But to proceed to the other Article.

I think it is your Opinion, that it is possible to attain in this Life, as *great Rectitude of Nature*, as our first Parents were possessed of before the Fall. And I can truly say, in the Presence of the Searcher of all Hearts, that I could heartily wish that this were true. I think that I could be willing to suffer any thing, in order to attain to such a State: To have all the Clouds of Ignorance dispelled from my Mind! To have it in my Power always, without Interruption, to fix my Affections on my *God*! What so desirable as this? What is there in this World so worthy a wise Man's Pursuit?

My one Desire is this,
Thy only Love to know:
To seek and taste *no other Bliss*,
No other Good below.

But I sincerely confess, that I cannot find any Ground, either from *Scripture* or the *Catholic Church*, to expect such a State as this; but much to the contrary. The *Scriptures* alleged by you, on this Occasion, (which I cannot now particularly examine, as I observed before), do not (as I think) prove it at all. The Texts, *He that is born of God*, &c. prove too much: for, if they are literally understood, it will follow that no one is a *Believer*, but he who is absolutely perfect; which is contrary to other plain Texts. And it is plain, that the Antithe-

be carried on throughout that Chapter, is absolutely between a *Child of God*, and one of the *Devil*; thus, *he that sinneth is of the Devil*; *he that is born of God doth not sin*: Again, *he that doth Righteousness* (that is, lives in the ordinary Practice of Righteousness), *is righteous even as he is righteous*. So that if the Words are to be rigorously interpreted, we must deny any one to be *born of God* at all, who is not as *perfectly righteous* as even *Christ himself*.

I see no Reason to recede from the common Interpretation of these Words, *Doth not sin*; "Doth not allow himself to live in any known Sin."

You need not be informed, Sir, that absolute Negatives are almost always, in the new Testament, used for Comparatives; that is a Point, I take for granted, that you are much better acquainted with than myself. One thing, however, I beg Leave, to recommend to your Consideration; namely, that St. John, in his Gospel, thrice represents our blessed Lord as using this Phrase of not sinning, *absolutely* when it is very evident that it must be understood in a *very restrained Sense*. St. John, ix. 3. xv. 22. and 24.

You allow that there was no such State attainable under the Jewish Dispensation; and yet I believe, that there are Texts of Scripture full as express for that Doctrine in the *Old Testament*, as any in the *New*. Thus Psalm cxix. "They do NO Iniquity, &c. I have restrained my Feet from EVERY evil Way, &c. With my WHOLE

"*W H O L E Heart have I sought thee.*" To which a Multitude of other Texts might be added, if Time would permit. It is said of *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* (who did not live under the *New Testament* Dispensation), "that they walked in All the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord **BLAMELESS.**" Words very full and expressive!

The Doctrine of our Church hath likewise been greatly mistaken concerning this Article; which I the more wonder at, as her Sentiments are so easy to be known in this Particular. To imagine her as teaching a Doctrine which she requires *Subscription against* (see Articles the 9th, 12th, and 15th), might appear a little strange, were it not considered at the same Time that it is very easy for Persons engaged in a Multitude of Business, sometimes to overlook very plain things.

I can hardly think, Sir, that you have sufficiently attended to the Consequences which necessarily follow from this Doctrine: As suppose, for Instance, that two Persons *absolutely free from the Corruption of human Nature*, should marry and have Children; it is very evident that they could convey no Corruption of Nature to their Offspring, nor they to theirs; even to the remotest Generations: And therefore this *new Species* of Mankind would stand in no need of a *Saviour*; that is, in no need of *Christ's Righteousness* to justify them: In no need of *his Spirit* to enable them to do their Duty, they being possessed of that Rectitude of Nature which will enable them to act entirely for themselves. How such

Such a State of things as this will agree with the Scripture, I leave you to judge, and shall here conclude this Subject. But before I take my Leave, I must crave your Indulgence for the many Inaccuracies which you will find, both in this and the former; occasioned, in a great measure, by the Haste with which they were thrown together.

May God give us Grace to discern, in all Things, what is good and acceptable in his Sight; and incline our Hearts to hate every false Way.

I am, Sir,

With great Respect,

Your obliged humble Servant,

P. V.

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LET

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The Reverend Mr. WESLEY to P. V.

SIR, *July 25, 1759.*

I would be a Pleasure to me, to write more
 largely than my Time will now permit. Of
 all the Disputants I have known, you are the
 most likely to convince me of any Mistakes I
 may be in; because you have found out the
 great Secret, of speaking the Truth in Love.
 When it is thus proposed, it must surely win its
 Way into every Heart which is not purposely
 shut against it.

That you may clearly see, wherein we agree
 or wherein we differ, I have sent you the Mi-
 nutes of some of our late Conferences. Several
 Concessions are made therein, both with Regard
 to Assurance and to Christian Perfection; Some
 Difficulties cleared, and a few Arguments pro-
 posed, tho' very nakedly and briefly. When
 you have read these, you may come directly to
 any Point of Controversy which may still remain.
 And if you can shew me, that any farther Con-
 cessions are needful, I shall make them with
 great Pleasure.

On the Subject of your last, I can but just observe, *First*, With Regard to the Assurance of Faith, I apprehend that the whole Christian Church, in the first Centuries, enjoyed it: For tho' we have few Points of Doctrine, explicitly taught in the small Remains of the Ante-Nicene Fathers; yet, I think, none who carefully reads *Clemens Romanus*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, *Origen*, or any other of them, can doubt whether either the Writer himself possess'd it, or all whom he mentions as real Christians. And I really conceive, both from the *Harmonia Confessionum*, and whatever else I have occasionally read, that all the reformed Churches in *Europe* did once believe, "Every true Christian has the divine Evidence of his being in Favour with God."

So much for *Authority*. The Point of *Experience* is touched upon in the Conferences.

As to the *Nature* of the thing, I think a *divine Conviction* of Pardon is directly implied in the *Evidence* or *Conviction* of Things unseen: But if not, it is no Absurdity to suppose that when God pardons a mourning broken-hearted Sinner, his Mercy necessarily obliges him to another Act; to witness to his Spirit, that he has pardoned him.

I know that I am accepted; and yet that Knowledge is sometimes shaken, tho' not destroyed, by Doubt or Fear. If that Knowledge were destroyed, or wholly *withdrawn*, I could not then say, I had Christian Faith. To me it appears the same Thing to say, "I know God

"has accepted me," or "I have a *sure Trust*
"that God has accepted me."

I agree with you, that justifying Faith cannot be, a Conviction that I am justified: And that a Man, who is not assured that his Sins are forgiven, may yet have a Kind or Degree of Faith, which distinguishes him not only from a Devil, but from an Heathen; and on which I may admit him to the Lord's Supper. But still I believe, the proper Christian Faith which purifies the Heart, implies such a Conviction.

As to Christian Perfection, I believe Two who were made perfect in Love, never did, or will, marry together. *

I am, Sir,

Your Servant,

For Christ's Sake,

J. WESLEY.

LET.



L E T T E R III.

From P. V. to the Rev. Mr. WESLEY.

Rev. Sir,

Aug. 15, 1755.

I Received yours of the Twenty-fifth ult, on *Saturday* last; and am much obliged to you for the *Compliment* you are pleased to make me: You inform me "that in order to satisfy me "wherein we differ, you have sent me the *Minutes* of some of your late Conferences; wherein several Concessions are made, both with "Regard to Assurance and to Christian Perfection; some Difficulties cleared, and a few Arguments proposed, &c." But I apprehend, Sir, by this Description, that the Pamphlet which I have received, is not the same that you designed for me; but *another*, sent by Mistake, in the Stead thereof: For, having very carefully examined it from End to End, several times, I cannot find one Syllable, therein, relating to either of the Particulars above-mentioned. The Title of it is, "Minutes of several Conversations between the Reverend *John* and *Charles Wesley's*, "and others." It consists of Five Conferences; the first of which is dated *June 25, 1744*; and the last, *November 16, 1749*. The

Sum of them all relates to the ordering your Society.

You give it, Sir, as your Opinion, "that the whole Christian Church, in the first Centuries, enjoyed the *Assurance of Faith*." But I must beg of you to inform me what Ground you have for this Assertion, for I am not disposed to grant it true without the least Tittle of Proof; nay, against very strong Appearances (or rather very clear Evidence) to the contrary.

You complain of the few remaining Points of Doctrine, explicitly taught by the Ante-Nicene Church: But, Sir, can you really believe that the whole Christian Church, both Ante and Post-Nicene, had they believed as you do, "that no Person is a true Believer in *Christ*, 'till he knows that his Sins are forgiven," could have been entirely silent in an Article of such Importance. How many Instances might be pointed out where it is evident that if they had been of your Sentiments, they must have declared themselves on this Head as plainly as you have done. To name only one; that is, the Case of the Validity of Baptism administered by Hereticks; which was so warmly agitated between St. Cyprian and others. You know, Sir, that the Ancient Church ever held, that true Baptism always conferr'd Remission of Sins: And had they been of your Opinion, "that Remission, and the Knowledge thereof (by internal Revelation), always accompanied each other," how easily might

might this Controversy have been decided? It needed only to appeal to some of those Persons who had been baptized by Hereticks, and ask them, "Did you receive the Knowledge of the Remission of your Sins, when you were baptized?" And which Way soever the Question had been answered, it had decided the Case.

You assert farther, that "whoever will carefully read the Writings of *Clemens Romanus*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, &c." cannot doubt whether either the Writer himself, or all whom he mentions as real Christians, possess the Assurance of Faith." To which I reply, that *Clemens Romanus*, *Ignatius*, and *Polycarp*, enjoyed the Assurance of Faith, I make no question: Nay, I will grant you more than this, if you please; namely, that they were endowed with the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost: This may be proved of St. *Ignatius* in particular, from a Passage in his Epistle to the *Philadelphians*; and that great Numbers of Persons in the *Ante* (I add, and *Post*) *Nicene* Churches too, enjoyed an Assurance of God's Favour; I am very ready to grant likewise. But that every true Believer therein, was possessed of a clear Assurance that his Sins were forgiven, I must take the Liberty to deny 'till I see it proved; which, I am confident, never will, never can be done; The contrary must be evident to every attentive Enquirer. As to the Epistles of *Clemens Romanus*, *Ignatius*, and *Polycarp*, I have read them over again and again; I have given them a Review

on this Occasion, and cannot find the least Intimation either that the Writer himself, or any of those to whom he writes, was possessed of an Assurance of Faith, or any thing like it: There is, indeed, a Passage in the Relation of the *Martyrdom* of St. Ignatius, that seems at first View to intimate such a Thing of himself; but I am far from thinking it a clear Proof of the Fact: For when he affirms that "he carried *Christ* within him," instead of asserting that he felt his Presence at that Time, he only refers to that general Promise, "*I will dwell in them and walk in them.*" *

As to the *Reformed Churches*, if they have asserted any thing of that Kind unsupported by Antiquity, their Authority is of no Value at all: For (as our excellent Bishop *Pearson* observes) "whatsoever is new in Christianity, is certainly false." But I apprehend that this is far from being the Case (at least I am sure that our own Church stands clear of the Charge). Can you point me out the Men, among the Reformers, who have taught clearly and plainly that no Person is a true Believer in *Christ*, 'till he knows by immediate Revelation that his Sins are forgiven? No, Sir, this was never the Doctrine of *Christ's* Church, 'till the *Moravians* † invented it a few Years ago.

* See Archbishop *Wake's* Apostolical Letters, p. 131, &c.

† See Mr. *Wesley's* First Journal.

You affirm that "as to the *Nature* of the thing, you think a *divine Conviction* of Pardon, is directly implied in the *Evidence* or *Conviction* of Things not seen."

To which I answer; *First*, That a divine Conviction of Pardon is not *directly*, nor *at all*, implied in that Faith which is the procuring Cause of Justification (of which I was there speaking), is very evident from this Consideration, that the thing unseen of which I have Evidence, is not that my Sins *are forgiven* (that would suppose them to be forgiven *before* I believe): But of this other Matter of Fact, that God is ready to forgive them; and you yourself acknowledge, a little lower, "that justifying Faith cannot be a Conviction that I am justified."

Secondly, Tho' I were to admit that "a divine Conviction of Pardon is directly implied in the Belief that a Person's Sins were forgiven;" yet that would never prove the Point for which it is brought, unless it can be shewn (which it certainly cannot, the contrary being very evident) that the least Degree of *divine Evidence*, and a *clear Assurance*, are one and the same thing. But that a Person may have a *degree* of divine Evidence of a Fact, who has not a full Assurance thereof, will (I conceive) appear very plainly from the five following Instances.

That the Spirit of God did strive with the Inhabitants of the Antediluvian World, in order
to

to bring them from the Error of their Ways, is very plain from Scripture. This, to them, was a *Kind* or *Degree* of *divine Evidence*, that if they put away the Evil of their Doings, God would again receive them into his Favour.

Secondly, That the Benefits of *Christ's* Death are convey'd to every worthy Receiver of the Sacraments, the Scripture very plainly declares; and therefore when I receive the *Lord's Supper*, I have a *Degree* of *divine Evidence* higher than the former, that all my Sins are blotted out.

Thirdly, It being declared in Scripture, "that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God, that the Dead will rise, and that God will judge the World." Of all this I have a *Degree* of *divine Evidence*, still higher than either of those specified above.

Fourthly, Those immediate Communications of God's Grace, by which I find myself enabled to perform my Duty, and to raise up my Affections above the things of this World, in a Manner far above the Reach of my own natural Abilities, is to me a higher *Degree* of *divine Evidence* that God is with me, than either of the former is of those several Facts to which they respectively bear Witness.

Fifthly and *lastly*, Those sensible Manifestations of God's Presence, which he is pleased, at times, to communicate to the Souls of his People, are

to them a Degree of *divine Evidence* of his Favour, of a still higher Kind than any of those before mentioned.

And thus, Sir, I hope it plainly appears, that a Degree of *divine Evidence*, and a *clear Assurance*, are very different Things.

You proceed; "but if not, it is no Absurdity to suppose that when God pardons a mourning broken-hearted Sinner, his Mercy necessarily obliges him to another Act; to witness to his Spirit, that he has pardoned him."

To which I reply, that I am surprized to find any thing so very unphilosophical, drop from the Pen of a Person of your Abilities: To talk of God's Mercy, as *necessarily obliging him*! What strange Language is this? Do you not consider, Sir, that the Exercise of Mercy is a mere voluntary thing; and does it therefore follow, that because God has been pleased to exercise one Act which he was no way obliged to exercise, that therefore he must necessarily exercise another? You cannot, I am persuaded, approve of this Slip of your Pen, in Defence of a *darling indefensible Hypothesis*.

You subjoin; "I know that I am accepted, and yet that Knowledge is sometimes shaken, tho' not destroyed, by Doubt or Fear; if it were destroyed, or wholly withdrawn, I could not then say I had Christian Faith,"

Amazing

Amazing indeed ! But to speak to both these Assertions ; and *First*, as to the Distinction between shaken, withdrawn, and destroyed, you will *I trust*, on Reflection, be convinced that it is absolutely without a Difference : For whatsoever I *doubt*, or *fear*, is not true ; I cannot possibly, *while that Doubt remains*, be assured is true. Would it not be a very absurd and contradictory Speech, to say I am *fully assured* that my Sins are forgiven ; and yet I doubt whether they are or not, nay I fear they are not ? You would certainly, Sir, think that Person not well in his Wits, who should offer to talk at such a Rate : In short, *Doubt*, *Fear*, and *Assurance*, are absolute Incompatibles ; and can no more exist together in one and the same Person, concerning any single Proposition, than the clear shining of the Sun in a Room, can consist with a total Privation of Light therein, in one and the same Moment of Time,

Secondly, With Respect to the other Assertion : I observe that it proceeds from confounding *Assurance* with *Faith*, and making it to be of the *Essence* of it, when it is quite a distinct thing from it ; neither does it proceed from one and the same Agent. *Faith* is an *Act* of my *Mind*, assenting to the Truth of a Proposition ; and *Assurance* is an *Act* of the *Holy Ghost*, testifying to me that *God* has accepted me : In consequence of such *antecedent Act*, must I not believe, before the *holy Spirit* can testify to me that I am accepted in consequence of my *Faith* ? And can that
which

which existed before such Testimony of the Spirit was given, depend on such Testimony for its Existence? Impossible! It is all over *Contradiction* to assert it.

You next proceed to affirm, that "to you it appears the same thing to say, I *know* that God has accepted me, and I have a *sure Trust* that he has accepted me."

To which I reply, that supposing this were really true, it is I judge quite beside the Purpose: For to have a *sure Trust*, is one thing; and to know certainly that my *Trust* is a *sure one*, is quite another: And it is the former of these only, with which our Church is concerned. I may have repented of my Sins in such a Manner as God requires, and may believe that I have; and trust that, on that Account, God has accepted me for the Sake of what *Christ* has done and suffered. This is undoubtedly a *sure Trust*, it being founded on the Terms required by the Gospel: But to be absolutely certain that I have actually performed the Gospel Conditions, is a very different thing; and had I such a Certainty, I could not be said to *trust* at all, for I should be absolutely certain that the thing was done; and "What a Man seeth, why doth he yet *trust* for?"

If I were to say in your Presence, when the Sun shines very clear, that I trust the Sun shines to-day; would you not immediately remark the Impropriety? Or if St. *Paul* (in the Account of his

his Conversion, had told us that he had a *sure Trust* that he saw a Light shine above the Brightness of the Sun, would you not have thought it a very absurd Speech? You cannot but perceive, that the Words *Trust* and *Knowledge* convey very different Ideas.

You say that you agree " that a Man who is " not assured that his Sins are forgiven, may " yet have a Kind or Degree of Faith which distinguishes him not only from a *Devil*, but " from an *Heathen*; on which you may admit " him to the Lord's Supper.

But, Sir, is *this Faith* that this Man is possessed of, *that Faith* with which Justification is essentially connected, or is it not? If it be, the Person is a *true Believer* having that *Faith* which is required by the Gospel; If it be not, how can you admit him to be a Partaker of that Ordinance which God has appointed to be the effectual Conveyance of all the Benefits of *Christ's* Life and Death, when he wants the Qualification which God requires in order thereto? You know, that the ancient Church would never administer this Sacrament to any but those who were denominated the Faithful, whose Sins they supposed had been remitted in Baptism; and in case of any wilful Sin after that, they were suspended from the Lord's Table 'till the Church thought that God was again willing to be reconciled to them on Account of their Repentance, and then the Sacrament was supposed to be the Instrument of Absolution. In short, it was

was called the *Perfection*, or *Consummation*, of a Christian. But to talk of going to either of the Sacraments without Faith, is a kind of Language to which the primitive Church was an utter Stranger: For as the very learned Dr. *Waterland* observes, "besides a right Faith in the general, a particular Belief with Respect to the *Graces* and *Benefits* of a worthy Reception of this Sacrament, was anciently as well as reasonably judged to be a previous Qualification for it."

To the latter Part of this Paragraph, "that the proper Christian Faith, which purifies the Heart, implies such a Conviction." I shall only reply, that I am of a very different Opinion.

Concerning Christian Perfection, you say that "you believe two who were made perfect in Love, never did or will marry together."

It might be sufficient to answer this, by asking, *Why*, is the Marriage State proper for those only who are tainted with Sin and Corruption? But to speak to it more directly: That two Persons absolutely free from Sin have been married, and that by the express Command of God himself, is evident from the Case of our first Parents: And as "Marriage is honourable in all," I cannot see why two perfect Persons (supposing

there were any such) might not marry now. I am sure the contrary can never be proved. But if it could, the Difficulty is not one Jot removed: For the Question will still return. Suppose that two Persons, already married, should attain to such a State? The very same Consequences would inevitably follow, as on the other Supposition. And I suppose you will hardly venture to affirm, that God will never make any married Couple (capable of having Children) perfect. If you did, I should ask you, *first*, What Ground you had for such an *arbitrary Hypothesis*? and *secondly*, How you came to marry yourself, when you judged it would be an infallible Means of keeping either *yourself*, or *your Wife*, from that State which is of *all others* the most desirable? I might go on to ask you farther on this Subject, Why Persons are subject to Death, notwithstanding they are (in your Opinion) delivered from *all* the Corruptions of human Nature? When the Reason assigned in Scripture, why the Body is subject to Death, is, *because of Sin*. But as you have been pleased to touch this Subject but very lightly, I am unwilling to press upon you any farther, and shall therefore conclude. May God grant both you and me, a right Judgment in all Things.

I did intend to have postponed my Answer 'till the next Week, when I should have had Leisure to have put it in better Order, had I not been informed you were going from *London*; however I hope, notwithstanding my Haste, that

nothing has dropt from me on this Occasion,
contrary to that Respect which I am desirous of
always shewing to you. If you meet with any
thing that you judge looks that way, please to
esteem it contrary to the Intention, and without
the Knowledge of

S I R,

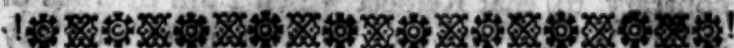
Your very affectionate,

Humble Servant,

P. V.

C

LET



L E T T E R I V.

The Reverend Mr. WESLEY to P. V.

SIR,

Feb. 5, 1756.

I Was in *Cornwall* when your last was brought to the Foundery, and delivered to my Brother. When I returned it was mislaid, and could not be found; so that I did not receive it 'till some Months after the Date.

You judge right, with Regard to the Tract inclosed to you. It was sent to you by Mistake, for another that bears the same Name.

Christian Perfection, we agree, may stand aside for the present. The Point now to be considered, is *Christian Faith*. This, I apprehend, implies a *divine Evidence*, or *Conviction* of our *Acceptance*: You apprehend it does not.

In debating this (or indeed any) Point with you, I lie under a great Disadvantage. *First*, You know *me*, whereas I do not know *you*: *Secondly*, I am a very slow, you seem to be a very swift, Writer: *Thirdly*, My Time is so taken up, from Day to Day, and from Week to Week, that I can spare very little from my stated
Em-

Employments : So that I can neither write so largely, nor so accurately, as I might otherwise do. All, therefore, which you can expect from me, is (not a close-wrought Chain of connected Arguments, but) a short Sketch of what I should deduce more at large, if I had more Leisure.

I believe the *ancient Fathers* are far from being silent on our Question ; tho' none, that I know, has treated it *ex professo*. But I have not Leisure to wade thro' that Sea. Only to the Argument from the Baptism of Hereticks, I reply, if any had averred, during that warm Controversy, " I received a Sense of Pardon, when I was baptised by such an Heretick ;" those on the other Side would in no wise have believed him ; so that the Dispute would have remained as warm as ever. I know this from plain Fact : Many have received a Sense of Pardon, when I baptised them. But who will believe them, when they assert it ? Who will put any Dispute on this Issue ?

I know, likewise, that *Luther*, *Melanchthon*, and many other (if not all) of the Reformers, frequently and strongly assert, that every Believer is conscious of *his own* Acceptance with God ; and that by a *supernatural Evidence*, which if any chuse to term *immediate Revelation*, he may. But neither have I Leisure to re-examine this Cloud of Witnesses. Nor indeed (as you justly observe) would the Testimony of them all together, be sufficient to establish an unscriptural Doctrine. Therefore, after all, we must be determined by higher Evidence. And herein we are clearly

agreed: We both appeal to the *Law and to the Testimony*: May God enable us to understand it aright.

But first, that you may not beat the Air, by disproving what I never attempted to prove, I will shew you, as distinctly as I can, what my Sentiments are upon the Question; and the rather, because I plainly perceive you do not yet understand them: You seem to think I allow *no Degrees* in Grace, and that I make no Distinction between the *full Assurance* of Faith, and a low or common *Measure* of it.

Several Years ago, some Clergymen and other Gentlemen, with whom we had a free Conversation, proposed the following Questions to my Brother and me, to which we gave the Answers subjoined.

June 25, 1744.

Ques. What is *Faith*?

Ans. *Faith*, in general, is a divine, supernatural Elenchos of Things not seen, *i. e.* of past, future, or spiritual: It is a spiritual Sight of God, and the Things of God. Justifying Faith, is a divine Elenchos that *Christ* loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.

Ques. Have all Christians this Faith? And may not a Man have it, and not know it?

Ans. That all Christians have such a Faith as implies a Consciousness of God's Love, appears from *Rom. viii. 15. Eph. iv. 32. 2 Cor. xiii.*

xiii. 5. *Heb.* viii. 10. 1 *John* iv. 10. v. 1. &c.
And that no Man can have it, and not know
that he has, appears from the Nature of the
Thing. For Faith after Repentance, is Ease
after Pain, Rest after Toil, Light after Dark-
ness. It appears also from its immediate Fruits,
which are Peace, Joy, Love, and Power over
Sin.

Ques. Does any one believe any longer than he
sees, loves, obeys God?

Ans. We apprehend not: *Seeing* God being
the very Essence of Faith; Love and Obedience
the inseparable Properties of it.

Aug. 2, 1745.

Ques. Is an Assurance of God's pardoning
Love, absolutely necessary to our being in his
Favour? Or may there possibly be some exempt
Cases?

Ans. We dare not positively say there are
not.

Ques. Is it necessary to final Salvation, in
those (as *Papists*) who never heard it preached?

Ans. We know not how far invincible Igno-
rance may excuse: Love hopeth all Things.

Ques. But what if one who does hear it preach-
ed, should die without it?

Ans. We determine nothing: We leave his
Soul in the Hands of him that made it.

Ques. Does a Man believe any longer than he sees a reconciled God?

Ans. We conceive not: But we allow there may be very many Degrees in seeing God: Even as many as are between seeing the Sun with the Eyelids closed, and with the Eyes open.

The Doctrine which I espouse, 'till I receive farther Light, being thus explained and limited; I observe,

First, A *divine Conviction* of my being reconciled to God, is (I think) directly implied (not in a *divine Evidence*, or *Conviction* of something else, but) in a *divine Conviction* that *Christ* loved me, and gave himself for me; and still more clearly in *the Spirit's bearing Witness with my Spirit*, that I am a Child of God.

Secondly, I see no Reason either to retract or soften the Expression, "God's Mercy, in some Cases, obliges him to act thus and thus." Certainly as his *own Nature obliges* him (in a very clear and sound Sense) to act according to Truth and Justice in all Things, so, in some Sense, his Love *obliged* him to give his only Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish. So much for the Phrase. My Meaning is, the same Compassion which moves God to pardon a mourning, broken-hearted Sinner, moves him to comfort that Mourner, by witnessing to his Spirit that his Sins are pardoned.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, You think, "*Full Assurance* excludes all Doubt." I think so too. But there may be Faith, without *full Assurance*. And these lower Degrees of Faith do not exclude Doubts, which frequently mingle therewith, more or less. But this you cannot allow: You say it cannot be *shaken* without being *overthrown*, and trust I shall be "convinced upon Reflection, that the Distinction between *shaken* and *destroyed* is absolutely without a Difference." Hark! the Wind rises! the House *shakes*! but it is not *overthrown*. It *totters*; but it is not *destroyed*.

You add, "*Assurance* is quite a distinct Thing from *Faith*; neither does it depend on the same Agent. *Faith* is an Act of my Mind; *Assurance* an Act of the Holy Ghost." I answer, *First*, The *Assurance* in question, is no other than *the full Assurance of Faith*; therefore it cannot be a distinct thing from *Faith*, but only so high a Degree of *Faith* as excludes all Doubt and Fear. *Secondly*, This *Plerophory*, or *full Assurance*, is doubtless wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. But so is every Degree of true *Faith*: Yet the *Mind of Man* is the Subject of both. I believe freely: I believe without all Doubt.

Your next Remark, is, "the Spirits witnessing that we are accepted, cannot be the Faith whereby we are accepted." I allow it. A Conviction of our being *justified*, cannot be implied in *justifying Faith*.

You subjoin, "a *sure Trust* that God hath
 "accepted me, is not the same Thing with
 "knowing that God has accepted me." I think
 it is the same Thing with *some Degree* of that
 Knowledge: But it matters not, whether it be
 so or no. I will not contend for a Term: I
 contend only for this, that every true Christian
 Believer has a "sure Trust and Confidence in
 "God, that thro' the Merits of *Christ*, he is re-
 "conciled to God:" And that in consequence
 of this, he is able to say, *the Life which I now*
live, I live by Faith in the Son of God, who loved
me, and gave himself for me.

It is a very little Thing to excuse a warm Ex-
 pression (if you need any such Excuse) while I
 am convinced of your real good Will to,

S I R,

Your Servant,

For Christ's Sake,

J. WESLEY.

LET.

LETTER V.

From P. V. to the Rev. Mr. J. Wesley.

Rev. Sir,

Feb. 12, 1756.

I Had the Favour of yours: You tell me that
 "I do not yet understand your Sentiments,"
 concerning the Article in Debate. Indeed, to be
 plain with you, I think it impossible to reconcile
 you with yourself, on this Head.

In order, therefore, to have a clear Perception
 of what your Opinion really is, I have drawn up
 the following Queries, which if you will please
 to answer, with a Monosyllable only, I shall es-
 teem it a Favour.

Query 1. Can a Man who has not a clear Af-
 surance that his Sins are forgiven, be in a State
 of Justification? Yea, or nay?

Query 2. I ask a Person the following Ques-
 tion. Do you know that your Sins are forgiven?
 He answers: "I am not *certainly* sure, tho' I do
 not entertain the *least* Doubt thereof." Is this
 Man in a State of Justification, in your Opinion?
 Yea, or nay?

Query

Query 3. I ask another Person, as above: He replies, as before, I am not *certainly sure*, "but I *hope*, or *trust*, that they are." Is this Person, in your Opinion, in the State above mentioned? Yea, or nay?

Query 4. Can any one know that his Sins are forgiven, while he has any Doubt thereof? Yea, or nay?

I must beg the Favour of you to excuse my Concealment at present: It is probable that my Reasons for so doing, may not long subsist.

I am, Sir,

With Respect,

Your humble Servant,

P. V.

* The Reason of so odd a Question as the above may appear to be, was the Difficulty of knowing what Mr. *Wesley's* Sentiments really were concerning that Particular: Sometimes he seems to assert, that no Person is a Believer, unless he has a clear Assurance; and at others, quite the contrary.

L E T -

LETTER VI.

From the Rev. Mr. WESLEY to P. V.

SIR,

Feb. 18, 1756.

YOU ask, "Can a Man who has not a
" *clear Assurance* that his Sins are for-
" given, be in a State of Justification?"

I believe there are some Instances of it.

2. "Can a Person be in a State of Justifi-
" cation, who being asked, Do you know your
" Sins are forgiven? answers, I am not *certain-*
" *ly sure*; but I do not entertain the *least Doubt*
" of it?"

I believe he may.

3. "Can he, who answers, I *trust* they
" are?"

T'Tis very possible, he may be in that State.

4 "Can

3. " Can any one *know* that his Sins are forgiven, while he *doubts* thereof?"

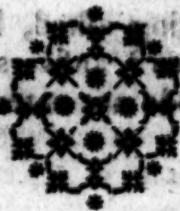
Not at that Instant, when he doubts of it: But he may *generally* know it, tho' he doubts at some *particular* Time.

I answer as plainly and as simply as I can, that if I am in a Mistake, I may the more easily be convinced of it.

See the Note on this Query, p. 42. Y
"given, he is in a state of justification."

I believe there are some Instances of it.

" Can a Person be in a state of Justification, who doubts? Do you know your Sins are forgiven, I am not certain. Sure, but I am in the least Doubt."



I believe he may.

3. " Can he, who answers, I trust they are?"

Let us say possible, he may be in that state.

Can



L E T T E R VII.

From P. V. to the Rev. Mr. WESLEY.

Rev. Sir,

Feb. 25, 1756.

I Had the Pleasure of yours, which gave me great Satisfaction, as I think your Concessions are abundantly sufficient to put a Stop to any farther Dispute between us concerning this Article.

Writing of *Controversy*, were I ever so well qualified for such an Employment, I am by no means fond of: The very little Good that I have observed to be done thereby, obliges me to assent to the Truth of Mr. *Hobbs's* Observation, "that Arguments seldom work on *Men of Wit*," "when once they have engaged themselves in a "contrary Opinion."

I must ingenuously confess, Sir, that I am not able to reconcile your Concessions, with what both yourself and Assistants so constantly assert in your *publick preaching*, "that if a Person does "not *know* that their Sins are forgiven, they "have no *true Faith*."

Permit me, therefore, to indulge a benevolent Wish, that you would bestow a little Time on this

this Subject, by giving it a serious, attentive, and impartial Reconsideration; which, thro' the Blessing of God, might be a happy means of making your Usefulness still more extensive, not only by relieving the Minds of many of your Hearers from a great deal of *Perplexity* and *Disquiet*, but also of freeing your Sentiments concerning *Faith* from that Embarrassment which they appear to me at present to labour under.

In your *first Appeal* you affirm, "that *Faith* " is the *Eye* of the *Soul*." This, if I mistake not, is making it its *perceptive Faculty*; that is, *the Understanding itself*: But, in your *last Letter to me*, you define it to consist in "*seeing God*;" "*Seeing God*, you say, being the *Essence of Faith*." Which, I think, is asserting it to be the *actual Perception of an Object*.

To me it appears as impossible to reconcile these Definitions together, as it is to make them agree with what I take to be the only true and proper Notion of *Faith*; namely, that it is "an Assent of the Mind to the *Truth of a Fact*, of whose Existence it has no *actual Perception*;" either from an *immediate View* of the Thing itself, or by necessary Inference from some other Thing of whose Existence it has an *actual Perception*." And I have the Satisfaction to observe, that the Sentiments of our very learned and accurate Bishop *Pearson*, exactly correspond with this Definition.

(With respect to the Article of *Assurance*, I shall only observe, that it is a subject that for some

some Years has pretty much exercised my Thoughts; and, from the Observations that I have made, I have been led to conclude not only that it is a Privilege which God does not please to grant to the Generality of *true Believers*, but that even the greatest Number of those who are so happy as to obtain it, are not possessed thereof for any long Time together; neither does this proceed from *any voluntary Defects* in their Conduct, but solely from the good Pleasure of God himself.

You seem, Sir, to be desirous of knowing who it is that has engaged you so long in this Dispute: I intend to satisfy you in that Particular, but shall first give the Reasons why I have hitherto thought proper to conceal my Name.

When I first undertook to write to you concerning the Doctrine of *original Sin*, tho' I was certain that the main Subtance of what I was about to affirm, concerning that Particular, might be proved to be true with *the Evidence of the strictest Demonstration*; yet I was well aware "of the remarkable Effects that Prejudice sometimes has, even over the most ingenuous minds." Can any good Thing come out of *Nazareth*? was the Objection of one who had a very remarkable Testimony to the Uprightness of his Intentions; and being apprehensive, from a Passage in one of your Journals, that I stood in but very indifferent Esteem with you; I judg'd that if I should subscribe with my proper Name, the most that I could hope to obtain for my Ob-

ser-

servations, would be a *cold, inattentive reading*; if they procured even that: I therefore chose to conceal myself, under the *Latin* Initials of a Lover of Truth.

When I went about to remonstrate to you concerning those Particulars which have been debated between us, I apprehended that my Reasons for Concealment became still stronger than before: For if I could not hope for an attentive Hearing, in a Matter wherein I thought myself not to differ from you at all; I could much less promise myself one, when the Case was quite the reverse: But as I conceive that you are, by this Time, fully acquainted with all the Force that my Observations contain, "I shall now (to use the Words of an eminent Writer) leave them to stand or fall; as I am desirous they should, according as they are found to have more, or less, weight in them."

Part of the Passage in your Journal referred to above, runs thus:—"I saw poor R. T. who had left our Society, &c." Which, the Moment I had read, I knew myself to be the Person intended thereby; not only from the initial Letters of my Name, but also from the other attendant Circumstances related in that Paragraph.

And now, Sir, you are informed who the Person is, by whom you have been engaged in this Dispute. I am very sensible of the Advantages that I put into your Hands, by gratifying you in this Particular; but, as I have nothing
else

else but Truth in View, I am determined to abide the Event. There is one thing in your Letters which I a little wonder at, namely, that you seem (by the Use of some Latin Words in your second and third Letters) to have thought that you were carrying on this Debate with a Scholar. I cannot imagine what could lead you to such a Conjecture. I am sure that I have been scrupulously careful not to lead you into such a mistake. In my first Letter, when I mentioned *Antiquity*, my Expression was, "If I am not very much misinformed;" in my second, "I cannot learn," &c. This I thought plainly enough intimated my Dependence on others (at least on Translations) for my Information. For had I been able to have consulted the Authors in their respective Originals, I should have expressed myself after a very different manner: Nay, so very careful was I not to cherish in you such an Opinion, that I studiously avoided giving in my *third Letter*, the *English* of two *Latin Words* in your *second*, which I could very easily have done: For having had a pretty large Number of Books passed under my Inspection, I have learned the Meaning of several *Latin Words* and *Sentences*; but I utterly abhor any thing that looks like a Desire to appear to be what I really am not.

I doubt not, Sir, but you will easily excuse the Trouble given you on this Occasion, when you reflect that in my first Letter I avoided the Mention of any thing wherein I apprehended you to be of a different Opinion from me; and when I entered on the other Particulars, it was at your

own Request ; tho' I conceive had the Case been really otherwise (as this is a Controversy wherein the Peace of Mankind is certainly very much concerned), my Conduct might very easily have been justified : For as a late *noble Writer* well observes, " In the Cause of God, as well as in the " Cause of Treason, every Man is an Officer."

I hope, Sir, that I have not (in the Course of my Papers) been wanting in Respect towards you ; willingly, I am sure I have not : You do, indeed, intimate something concerning a warm Expression, which I am intirely ignorant of, so hope you will excuse it. May God render your Usefulness still more extensive, by guiding you into *all Truth* ; which is the hearty Prayer of him who is, with great Respect,

Your obliged humble Servant,

RICHARD TOMPSON.

LET



LETTER VIII.

The Reverend Mr. WESLEY to Mr. TOMPSON.

My dear BROTHER,

March 16, 1756.

MY Belief in general is this, that every Christian Believer has a divine Conviction of his Reconciliation with God. The Sum of those concessions is, "I am inclined to think" "there may be some Exceptions." *

Faith implies both the *perceptive Faculty* itself, and the *Act of perceiving* God and the things of God. And the Expression, *seeing God*, may include both: The *Act* and the *Faculty* of seeing him.

Bishop *Pearson's* Definition is abundantly too wide, for the Faith of which we are speaking. Neither does he give that Definition either of *justifying* or *saving Faith*. But if he did, I should prefer the Definition of Bishop *Paul*.

A clear conviction of the Love of God, cannot remain in any who do not walk closely with God. And I know no one Person who has lost this, without some *voluntary Defect* in his Conduct: Tho' perhaps at the time, he was not

conscious of it; but upon Prayer, it was revealed to him.

Your Reasons for concealing your Name, were good: We cannot too carefully guard against Prejudice. You have no need of any Excuse at all. For you have done no Wrong, but rather a Pleasure, to

Your affectionate Brother,



J. WESLEY.

A clear conviction of the Love of God, can
 not remain in any who do not walk closely with
 him. And I know no one Person who has lost
 Page 3, line 10, *dele* himself; p. 8, l. 22, *for* Judgment,
read Judgment; p. 8, l. 15, and p. 9, l. 12, *dele* general;
 p. 11, l. 8, *for* *is*, *read* are; p. 15, l. 24, *dele* very; p. 19,
 l. 15, *for* the, *read* a; p. 32, l. 20, *for* Corruptions, *read*
 Corruption; p. 39, l. 35, *for* freely, *read* feebly.